

May 2003
Issue 7

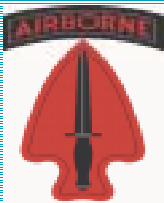
USASOC, Family Readiness
www.soc.mil

Inside this Issue

- 1** Army's First Lady
Addresses Senior Spouses
- 2** Making a Difference: The
Power to Prevent Child
Abuse
- 3** Stress is Natural
SF FRG is here!
- 4** Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
New Tricare Benefits for
Guard & Reserves
- 5** Support your Troops
VA Reduces SGLI
Premiums
Conference Works to
strengthen Special Ops
Families
- 6** Keeping in Touch
- 7** Family Readiness Groups
Volunteers Honored
- 8** Mark your Calendar
STOMP
New Staff Members
Publication Information
Submitting Articles
How to De-Stress

PHONE: 1-800-525-6846
FAX (910) 432-7343
HQ, USASOC
1 Desert Storm Drive,
Bldg E-2929
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

**USASOC, FAMILY
READINESS**



USASOC FAMILY NEWS



Army's First Lady addresses senior Special Operations spouses

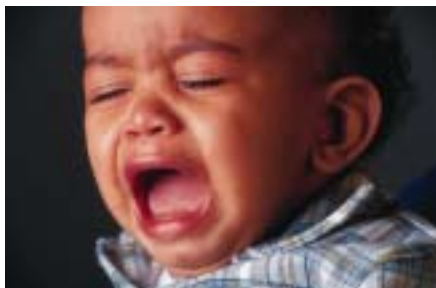
By Sgt. Kyle J. Cosner
U.S. Army Special Operations Command
FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. —
The families of Army special operations forces are meeting the challenges facing their unique situations, according to the Army's top spouse.

The wife of the Army Chief of Staff addressed the subject at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's Senior Spouse Luncheon here April 12, the first event of USASOC's weeklong Family Readiness Conference.

"When so many of our soldiers are deployed and fighting around the world, all facing such incredible challenges but performing magnificently, their families ... are impacted very directly and are carrying heavy burdens," she said. "So this conference is both timely and very important."

"Your increased operational deployments and mission requirements call for all the energy and amazing resourcefulness of the Army family – active, National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers." "This is particularly true within the (U.S. Army) Special Operations Command, where nearly 45 percent of soldiers are from the National Guard and Army Reserve units."

"For the last three and a half years, the Army has focused a great deal of energy on the three priorities of the Army vision – people, readiness and Transformation," she said. "And while Transformation and readiness have occupied a good bit of the front section of the news, the effort to address the well-being of our people has garnered some of the most important and significant shifts in how resources are prioritized and how services are delivered."



Making a Difference: The Power to Prevent Child Abuse

(Adapted from the article written by The Administration for Children and Families, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

Every member of our military and civilian community has the power to prevent child abuse and neglect. The following is a list of several ways that we can all make a difference:

✚ Understand the Problem.

Child abuse and neglect affect children of all ages, races, and incomes. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) estimated that 826,000 children nationwide were victims of maltreatment in 1999. Most experts believe that actual incidents of abuse and neglect are more numerous than statistics indicate.

✚ Understand the terms.

Child abuse and neglect take more than one form. Federal and State laws address four main types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, physical and emotional neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. However, some types of maltreatment, such as emotional abuse, are much

harder to substantiate than others.

✚ Understand the causes.

Most parents don't hurt or neglect their children intentionally. Many individuals were themselves abused and neglected. Some very young parents might not know how to take care of their babies or what they can reasonably expect from children at different stages of development. Certain circumstances place families under extraordinary stress and at greater risk.

✚ **Support programs that support families.** Parent education, community centers, respite care services, and substance abuse treatment programs help to protect children by addressing many of the circumstances that place families at risk for child abuse and neglect.

*Report suspected abuse and neglect. Certain states have difference reporting requirements, some states require everyone to report suspected abuse or neglect and others specify that members of certain professions, such as educators and doctors are mandatory reporters. However, if you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, call the police or your local child welfare agency.

✚ **Spread the word.** Help educate everyone in your community about child abuse and neglect. You can leave a stack of brochures at the public library, community center, and at

your faith institution. Even grocery stores usually have places to distribute community materials.

✚ **Strengthen the fabric of your community.** Know the persons who reside in your neighborhood. Give stressed parents a break by offering to watch their children. You can also make a difference by serving on certain civic clubs and boards that contribute to the well-being of children.

✚ Be ready in an emergency.

If you find yourself in a situation where you believe a child is being or is about to be, physically or verbally abused, here are some steps that you can take:

✚ Talk to the adult to get their attention away from the child.

- Ask if you can help in any way, offer to carry some packages or play with the child while the parent takes a break.
- If you see a child alone in a public place, stay with the child until the parent returns.

Finally, remember that child abuse prevention begins at home. Each parent should take time to re-evaluate parenting skills. Getting help when you need it is an essential part of being a good parent.





STRESS IS NATURAL

(Adapted from Care Steps)

Despite the negative effects that stress can have on body, mind and spirit, stress is a natural part of life.

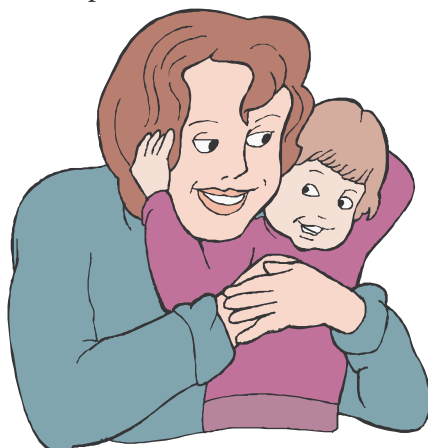
Research studies have revealed that everyone needs a certain level of stimulation to perform tasks and achieve goals. But when stress is excessive or overwhelming, it becomes distress.

Here are suggestions on how to better handle stress:

1. List your stresses. Simply write down the stresses you have experienced in the past year. The following list might help you get started: separation, death, divorce, job loss, financial problems, retirement, military move, new job, and an injury or illness.

Listing your stresses can help you to begin to understand why you feel so pressured and overwhelmed. In addition, this activity can also help you target specific stress points and then develop better strategies for managing stress.

2. Confront your stresses. Some stressful events are beyond control. Others are the result of choices and can therefore be regulated. It is also possible to alleviate certain stresses by saying no when people make unfair demands of your time and capabilities. Above all, don't put unrealistic expectations on yourself. When faced with a difficult day, establish priorities, tackle the top of your list first, and reward yourself for tasks accomplished.



3. Take care of yourself. If you are currently faced with round the clock expectations, such as caring for an aging parent, nurturing a sick child, or making major business decisions, you need some respite. **Make time for yourself.** Moreover, eating a balanced diet will help to fortify you against stress, as will adequate rest and exercise. Avoid the use of drugs and alcohol because they only deal with the symptom of stress – not the cause.

4. Reach out to trusted people. When you confide in others, you find companionship, encouragement, and assistance. Spirituality can be a source of continuing strength.

Inspirational reading, meditation, or prayer can renew your spirit and strengthen you against stress.

5. Improve your skills. Marriage and parenthood are two of the most stress-filled adventures, next to death and separation. However, help is available both to prepare you for the stresses of daily living and to guide you during times of difficulty. Take advantage of community courses and counseling services to sharpen your skills.

If you face the inevitable stresses of life and living, then make a conscious decision to make positive adjustments, learn helpful skills, and set new directions. Remember life will continue to offer numerous opportunities to change and to grow into the person that you long to be.

**SF Command Families,
we are here for you. If
you have any questions,
suggestions, or
concerns please contact
your section
representatives or SF
Command's FRG
Leader at 868-2429.
*** Look for SF
Command FRG Future
Updates in upcoming
newsletters. *****



Ribbon cutting ceremony held for new family resource center

By Pfc. Jennifer J. Eidson, USASOC PAO

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — The U.S. Army Special Operations Command Family Resource Center opened here recently with a ceremonial ribbon cutting. The ceremony, held April 15 at the new center, opened the doors to more than just a building. For the members of the command's family readiness groups, the ceremony marked the opening of new avenues of communication to family members around the world. The center, which has been in the works for six years, offers families a place to conduct meetings, gather information online, take online training and conduct video teleconferences.

"It is not a big building, but I believe it is going to have a huge purpose," said the Deputy Commanding General of USASOC. "It is an old building, but this USASOC Family Resource Center, I believe, will become a new home for our soldiers and their family members in the days ahead."

The center will add to the services already provided to the

family members of special operations soldiers by their installations, said the wife of the commanding general of USASOC.

"I am going to call this the brain center of family readiness, because it is the headquarters for our family readiness," she said. "It is not to take away from the installations and programs that are there, but we have a uniqueness in this command." With special operations units spread around the world, she said in order for them to make sure that all the families are provided with the correct materials for the special operations community, they needed a centralized location to gather and disseminate that information.

"(Family members) can still use the installation for their needs that those programs can provide, but there is still that special ops uniqueness that they can come here and get," she said.

Life for a soldier — single or married — is not an easy one, but the center will help with communication needs, said the Deputy Commanding General of USASOC.

"In other words, it is a place where we can get to our soldiers and family members, just for the business of taking care of family and self with the resources that are tailored to the particular challenges of the special operations community," he said.

To contact the resource center for assistance call (910) 432-9203. Hours of operation for the center, located here on Woodruff

Street in building 8-4807, are 7:30 a.m. EST to 4:30 p.m. EST.

NEW - Guard and Reserve family members eligible after 30 Days of Active Duty for Tricare Prime

NEWS RELEASE from the United States Department of Defense

Starting March 10, 2003, Guard and Reserve family members, if their sponsor is on active duty (federal) orders for more than 30 days, will be eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime and enjoy the access, standards, and cost shares associated with the Prime benefit.

In the past, sponsors had to be eligible in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and activated for 179 days or more before family members were eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime.



Guard and Reserve family members who reside with their sponsors in a Tricare Prime Remote location at the time of the sponsor's activation can now enroll in the Tricare Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members (TPRADFM) program.

For family members to be eligible to enroll in the TPRADFM program, sponsors and their family members must reside at a location that is at least 50 miles or more in distance, or approximately a one-hour drive from the nearest military treatment facility (MTF). Sponsors and family members also must be identified as eligible in DEERS.

Guard and Reserve sponsors need to verify that DEERS information for themselves and their family members is accurate and up-to-date. They are encouraged to contact DEERS at the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office toll free at (800) 538-9552. Sponsors and family members may also update their addresses in DEERS on the Tricare Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/DEERSAddress/>.

Future updates regarding benefits for members of the Guard and Reserve and their family members will be posted on the Tricare Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve>. The extra money saved during deployment may be needed later for unexpected household expenses.

Support your troops

and lift their spirits by sending them a special "Gifts From the Homefront" certificate. It's a great way to support our deployed American men and women in the military.

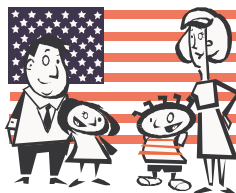
AAFES currently has 34 stores located throughout the SW Asian theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. CertifiChecks



can be redeemed at these facilities to purchase health and beauty items,

soft drinks, candy, snack items, pre-paid calling cards, music, DVD players and much more. And, once the fighting ends, AAFES will follow our service members north and set up facilities to support them in those new locations as well.

One of the most uplifting things, besides returning home, is receiving something from friends, family or loved ones. It makes all the difference to a troop's morale. Perfect for birthdays, promotions, anniversaries, or just for saying you're in my thoughts, "Gifts From the Homefront" significantly increases the morale and welfare of military personnel and their families. Whether they're serving at home or around the world, "Gifts From the Homefront" are easy to send and makes a lasting impression on service-members and their families everywhere!



VA Reduces SGLI Premiums for Military and Family Coverage

Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 10, 2003- The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that premiums for the Service members Group Life Insurance will be reduced, handing military members a few extra dollars in their pockets each month.

Beginning in July, the cost for a \$250,000 policy -- the maximum coverage -- will drop from \$20 to \$16.25 monthly, a \$3.75 savings. The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that rates for Veterans Group Life Insurance will not change.

Conference works to strengthen Special Operations families



By Sgt. Kyle J. Cosner
U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Fort Bragg's U.S. Army Special Operations Command held its eleventh annual Family Readiness Conference here April 11 to 16 with a renewed emphasis on the resources

families of deployed special operations soldiers need to stay strong, said the wife of USASOC commander, who assisted USASOC family readiness personnel in planning how the event would address current issues affecting the command.

“We’ve invited all the family readiness leaders to come in and discuss ... these issues,” she said

“We give them the latest and the greatest updated information, and we listen to any questions or concerns they may have,” she said.

The conference’s theme, “Get Ready, Get Set, Go — Deployments,” was designed to highlight the importance that the command has placed on the health of its families during long deployments, said USASOC’s Chief of Family Readiness.

Among the events scheduled during the conference was the grand opening of the new USASOC Family Resource Center, classes for family readiness group volunteers, a senior spouse luncheon and a volunteer recognition award ceremony.



The Chief of Family Readiness said the conference was designed to highlight the unique aspects of the family readiness issues that special operations soldiers and their families face.

While USASOC has learned a great deal from constant deployments over the command’s last 12 years of existence, the conference will always remain a necessity because of the influx of new personnel into the special operations community said the wife of USASOC commander.

“We have to keep informing our spouse’s on what’s out there to help them, because there’s a turnover — we get new people that come in all the time,” she said. “The men deploy quite often, and the women have to adjust to that. The biggest obstacle is that they deploy for a short period of time, say two or three weeks, then come home for a week and then they’re gone again on a different mission.”

“It’s a tough lifestyle, but it can be rewarding,” she said. “When you come into the special ops community, you know what you’re getting into.”

“Coping with Separations,” “Reunion Stress Management,” and “Emotional Aspects of Deployment on Children” were among the classes offered during the conference, all designed to focus on the realities of USASOC’s frequent deployments.

Nearly half the command is currently deployed in support of the global war on terror.

The Chief of Family Readiness pointed out that although the conference would help USASOC family readiness leaders improve

their organizations, they have long been prepared to meet the support needs of their units.

“Our families have needed, and had, that networking and support system in place much longer than the rest of the Army.”

Other events during the conference included a tour of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum here and a visit to a Fort Bragg weapons qualification range.

KEEPING IN



TOUCH

By Pat Marlow
HHC, USASOC FRG Representative

When talking with our teens, there are several things to keep in mind. As the mother of four children, ages 12 to 18, I have had numerous conversations about every aspect of life with my children. Here are some helpful tips to remember when talking with your teens.

*As a parent to a teen (or children) you should help them think for themselves. Encourage your teens to share their points of views and be open to what they believe and think.

*Talk with your teen – not talking above their heads or talking down to them. When you

talk with your teen about a problem, it should be just like you were telling a friend how to get through a problem.

*Do not lecture them (it usually turns communication right off.) The lecture mode of communication is frequently one-sided and the views of one person may be missed.

*Let your child make decisions with you. Give them two acceptable choices. Let them help decide proper punishment or reward for certain behaviors.

*Let your children know that they can talk to you. Insure that your children know that you are approachable and available to listen to their questions and concerns.

*Never use name-calling. Limit your language to terms that will build self-esteem and sense of purpose.

*Be a good listener. Show your teens that their perspective is of value and deserves to be heard. People are more likely to talk when a good listener is present.

*Give undivided attention to your children when engaged in discussions. Carve out a time and space for listening to your children.

*Listen without interrupting. Establish a time for simply listening to your children. There will be a time for responding, but listening is vital.

*When listening to teens draw out relevant information from the topics discussed. Take notes if

you must (mental or written), but make sure that you repeat back to your teens some of the important points that were made during your discussion time.

These communication tips are especially important for parents of military children. Our children are exposed to frequent moves, changing neighborhoods and the deployment of mother or father. Listen to your teens and establish a time for expressing concerns and questions. Cultivate an environment of trust, so that teens can discuss what matters most to them.

Family readiness groups, volunteers



Honored during luncheon

By Pfc. Jennifer J. Eidson
USASOC PAO

With the largest-ever deployment of troops from the U. S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C., its family readiness groups are being put to the test, and some of those groups and family members were recognized for their hard work during a recent luncheon.

USASOC honored its family readiness groups and volunteers

of the year from its active, Reserve and National Guard components April 14 during its Volunteer Recognition Luncheon as part of its annual Family Readiness Conference here.

Before recognizing the awardees, the attendees of the conference heard from guest speaker Kimberly P. Johnson, a children's book author and wife of an Airforce soldier.

Johnson expressed her thoughts of the humbleness of a volunteer through poetry.

"A volunteer is rich with success as their story, but you would never know it because they don't take the glory," she said.

The Reserve component volunteer of the year and a FRG member said the award was a benefit of the work.

"This was just part of the package deal, because my whole focus is definitely the volunteer job," she said. "I enjoy it so much that this was just an added bonus. It is our volunteers that work with us; they deserve this just as much as we do. They are great."

She said although the award is an addition to the enjoyment she gets from doing the work, it is also motivation for her to do more.

A member of the Active Duty Family Readiness Group of the Year said it was an honor for her to receive the active duty unit award for the members of her group.

"The family members work so hard to take care of each other and do what is necessary to keep the FRG a viable part of the unit.

Even though the group is always there for the families, it is when the soldier leaves that they are needed the most, she said.

She said that her family readiness group was able to earn the award because of the strength of each member.

The commander of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Speical Warfare Center and School said that money can buy all the equipment in the world, but it can't buy the dedication that the volunteers have for their groups.

"The one thing we can't buy them, is what you provide, it is what you do," he said. "We are so blessed with you volunteers, for those of you who commit your time and energy and your efforts and your passions to take care of our families."

By taking care of the families, these volunteers are helping out the soldiers, he said.

A member of the Reserve Family Readiness Group of the Year said it was a rewarding experience for her.

"This is awesome," she said. "It was really neat to be recognized because there are a lot of volunteers who worked to earn this. It was really awesome to be recognized for that work in front of our peers."

"We are on the Reserve side."
"People in the civilian world have no clue what an Army

spouse is going through when (the soldier) deploys or is even gone for two weeks. They can't understand because they have never been through it, and it is a really different experience. Our (soldiers) aren't going off on vacation, they are going off to serve their country."

Children also have a hard time when a parent is deployed, and these groups are there to help these children understand what is going on.

"I know that a family readiness group means children," she said. "Sometimes children are the hardest ones to get to understand what is going on around them because a lot of them are still to young to understand. I think these groups are great because their concerns are to make sure the family — the children — are going to be okay."

With current operations, the family readiness groups are becoming more important, she said.

She said that with so many deployments it is important for more people to get out and become part of a group.

The active component volunteer of the year is the president of her units FRG.

USASOC's National Guard volunteer of the year and the unit FRG of the Year were also recognized.



Mark Your Calendar Upcoming USASOC Events.....



REMINDER

The USASOC will hold its annual **Army Family Action Planning Conference 22-24 May 2003**. Each Group level and above command will have two representatives who participate in the process as delegates.

Family Advocacy Program Conference will be held 3-5 August 2003. Place to be announced. Look for more information

STOMP:

STOMP (Specialized Training of Military Parents) is a federally funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center established to assist military families who have children with special education or health needs. The staffs of the STOMP Project are parents of children who have disabilities and have experience in raising their children in military communities

and traveling with their spouses to different locations.

STOMP provides:

- Information and Referral
- World-wide relocation information
- Screen and place children with special needs seeking child care services
- Provide liaison for special education on/off post
- Provide specialized training in special needs for providers, military units and Family Readiness Groups



Take Care of Our Children

The USASOC Family Readiness Group would like to welcome our newest staff members: Family Advocacy Specialist, 432-7481, Family Program Coordinators: Special Forces Command – 432-4040; USACAPOC (A) – 432-4050; HHC, USASOC – 432-4051.



USASOC FAMILY NEWS

This newsletter contains official and unofficial information and is published in support of command Family Readiness Group activities. The USASOC Family Newsletter is published quarterly. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the Department of the Army or this command.

Items for publication should be forwarded to: USASOC, AOPE-FR Program Assistant or Family Program Specialist, Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28310.

*Phone numbers are:
(910) 432-9203 or 2093;
DSN 239-9203/2093; or
800-525-6846 ext 2-9203/2093*



How to "De-Stress"

Get more rest. Develop a weekly study schedule.

Learn to manage time more effectively.

Exercise regularly.

Do less. Simplify. Set priorities.

Cut down on drinking alcohol (or don't drink at all).

Reduce caffeine consumption.

Practice a relaxation technique at least 15 min./day.

Make an appointment with a health educator or counselor to learn effective stress management skills.

Get information on a yoga, tai chi, or medication class.

Laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh!

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Operations Division, Family Readiness Branch is requesting articles for its quarterly newsletter.

Help us share the most current information available. If your unit has innovative programs, projects being developed, or old program ideas that are working and you would like to share, submit articles by the 27th of each month to: Headquarters, USASOC, AOPE-FR, Program Assistant, Fort Bragg, NC 28310.

Submitted articles may be included in an upcoming newsletter.

